

ARLINGTON PARK & RECREATION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

Approved

September 26, 2023

The Town of Arlington Park and Recreation Commission came to order in the main meeting room at the Community Center on Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at 7:00pm.

Commission Members: Phil Lasker, Shirley Canniff, Leslie Mayer, Jen Rothenberg, Scott Walker, Josh Fenollosa and Sarah Carrier. Recreation Director Joe Connelly was also present.

Anticipated Speakers: Lindsay Whitacre

Preliminary Matter: Scott Walker, Park & Recreation Commission Chair, took formal attendance via a roll call and read a statement pertaining to Governor Baker's Public Meeting Law change due to COVID-19 regarding virtual meetings. Meeting business ground rules and procedures were also covered by Mr. Walker.

McClennan Skate Park

Ms. Whitacre, a resident of Arlington and parent, presented her findings on the condition of McClennan's skate park stating that there the structures are rotting, unusable and dangerous. She presented fundraising ideas, skate park resources and acknowledged parents and children in attendance looking to assist in making the project a reality. She stressed the need to update the park into a safe, usable resource for "tweens" that need opportunities for free-play aside from playgrounds and competitive sports.

Mr. Connelly – McClennan feasibility study slated for FY26, no current funding and not in 5-year Capital plan. Also noted that CPA funding is an annual ask but is not anticipated to apply within the next 3 years. Mr. Connelly explained the difference between a feasibility study and design plan and how funding is applied for and allocated.

Mr. Lasker – Ways to replace unsafe features, possibly through fundraising. Possibly solicit boy scout troop involvement. Research prefabricated options which cost less and are less work to install and maintain.

Mr. Fenollosa – Inquire about AHS woodworking class project. Offered his support and volunteered to meet with Mr. Connelly and Ms. Whitacre to discuss his experience with fundraising and community involvement with Hills Hill.

Mr. Walker – More discussion needed about immediate safety obligations.

Ms. Mayer – More discussion needed to address "tweens" and teens recreational needs.

Mr. Connelly's recommendations – Acquire a professional evaluation, design and construction recommendations and a cost estimate to determine fundraising needs. Create a short-term solution design and installation plan. Mr. Connelly will schedule a group meeting with Ms. Whitacre and Mr. Fenollosa, who offered his experience with fundraising and community involvement while working on the Hills Hill project.

FY 2025 CPA Requests

Mr. Connelly – CPA request due October 6, 2023. PRC will be applying for funding for Menotomy Rocks Park and Athletic Court projects (amount to be determined based on needs study assessment). Mr. Connelly presented recommendations for Buzzell, Crosby, North Union, Spy Pond and Summer Street.

The Commission primarily focused on Buzzell and Crosby. It was noted that Buzzell is close to the APD and already has lighting. Ms. Canniff stressed that its proximity to AHS makes it an ideal location considering the loss of the

school courts which were heavily used by high school youth. Crosby was determined to be in the worst condition and the plan would allow for more courts, separate pickleball/tennis courts and a field renovation.

Ms. Carrier – The existing design isolates the playground from the field. Mr. Lasker suggested reconfiguring the design and moving the courts closer to Winter Street to position the field next to the playground, noting that this may result in the loss of one court.

Ms. Rothenberg – Noted that five courts are mandatory for high school tournament play.

Ms. Mayer – CPA will likely ask PRC to prioritize the projects during the application process.

Mr. Connelly – Mr. Connelly noted that PRC showed good-faith by returning \$400K in Hurd funding to CPA. The Commission concluded that the courts project should take priority over Menotomy Rocks Park. He will also investigate CDBG funding as suggested by Ms. Rothenberg.

Projected costs – Crosby \$1.5M, not including lights. Buzzell \$1.4M with lights, \$650K, not including lights.

Mr. Lasker motioned to move forward with Crosby, seconded by Ms. Canniff and approved 4-1, with Ms. Mayer voting against.

Capital Project Review

Robbins Farm Park Construction –

- Mobilization begins week of 10/2
- Modification of plan to get out of tree drip line per meeting with Tree Warden, Mr. Connelly will share updates as needed
- Bulk of construction will take place in the spring
- Contract is signed

Hills Hill MTB –

- Agreed on contract with Weston and Sampson, first meeting in two weeks with working group
- Tree Inventory by Dave Tree Service – Recommended by Tree Warden
 - CPA Clarissa Rowe approved the intended scope
 - \$20K budgeted for tree inventory, spent \$4K
- First Design Team Meeting Planned for October 10th at 2:30 pm

Menotomy and Parallel Designs –

- Contract signed with Copley Wolff
- Held first design team meeting
- Copley Wolff attended Town Day and acquired survey data from public
- First on-site public engagement meetings set for 10/14
 - 9 am – 11 am at Parallel
 - 12 noon – 2 pm at Menotomy
- Survey work will be underway soon

Project Punchlists

- Hurd – Replaced some plantings and removed silt fence yesterday, September 25
- Reservoir – Replaced plantings
- Spy Pond Playground – Robinia inspection by Kompan

- Stratton School Playground – Rubber repair pending
- Peirce School Basketball Court – Another coat of paint being applied

Feasibility Study Funds

- Used \$3,000 for study of McClennen Park for potential community gardens
 - Draft plan is out for pricing

Comments and Items for Future Meetings – N/A

Approval of Minutes

- Ms. Rothenberg motioned to approve the minutes of August 29, 2023 as amended, seconded by Mr. Lasker and approved 5-0.
- Ms. Mayer motioned to approve the minutes of September 12, 2023 as amended, seconded by Ms. Canniff and approved 5-0.

New Business

Ms. Canniff – Took a moment to recognize the passing of former Arlington Selectman Charlie Lyons who also served as the Shawsheen Superintendent and on the Small Town Municipal Council.

Mr. Walker – Acknowledged the success of Town Day and the Arlington Recreation Fun Run.

Ms. Rothenberg – Requested further discussion to review and revise the Film Production request form created in 2007. A current project request is for a full day 25-person crew including a motorhome. The fees from film production reservations are allocated to the Parks Beautification Fund.

Ms. Mayer requested more information about the Art Commission murals. Mr. Connelly will reach out for details.

Public Comment –

Mustafa Varoglu – Referenced the August 8, 2023 PRC minutes noting discussion about expanding off-leash dog hours. He noted that dog-owner behavior at Menotomy Rocks Park has not changed but commended the ACO for her efforts over the summer. He stressed that he does not want to see dogs off-leash in the woods.

Ms. Rothenberg – Stated that the request for additional off-leash dog hours was an ask by supporters, it was not approved by the Commission because by-laws do not allow for it. She also requested a report from ACO. Mr. Connelly will contact ACO while noting that feedback received had been positive.

Liz Reisberg – Declared that the 6-9am off-leash hours are very congested with lots of walkers, joggers and a commuting bicyclist. She requested that it be noted that dog owners are making a conscious effort and believes that the situation has improved, contrary to what she stated as the “few that complain”.

The Commission uniformly noted that the number of complaints against off-leash dogs was just as high as those requesting more hours.

Mr. Lasker motioned to adjourn at 8:57pm, seconded by Ms. Canniff and approved 5-0.

The Arlington Park & Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes were respectfully submitted by Deanna Stacchi.